

Rose Valley Borough

a small borough achieves big conservation goals



Ordinances and Development Plan Review

Delaware County, PA

Rose Valley Borough in Delaware County faced the potential destruction of a cherished natural and historical landscape when the Saul Estate, the borough's last large estate, was proposed for development. Existing zoning would have permitted homes on one-acre lots spread across the 26-acre property, a National Register-eligible complex designed by prominent Arts and Crafts architect William Price.

Instead, Rose Valley chose a greener approach. With Natural Lands' guidance, the Borough adopted a Growing Greener: Conservation by Design ordinance in 2006, and worked with the developer on a conservation design that emphasized compact homes while preserving 50 percent of the property as open space. The plan saved the historic estate house on a three-acre "conservancy lot" along with several period outbuildings, a bridge, and numerous arboretum-quality trees. The adjacent 12-acre Maurice and Adele Saul Wildlife Sanctuary expanded in size when the developer, Vaughan and Sautter Builders, donated nearly six acres of permanently preserved open space from the development.

In 2009, the development received the Commonwealth Award for Design from 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania, an organization that promotes land use policies and practices that protect the state's natural and cultural resources. In granting the award, the jury noted that "Traymore is a testament to what can be achieved when developers, municipalities, and nonprofit partners work together."

From the beginning, Borough officials involved the close-knit community in the decision-making process. Residents wholeheartedly supported the conservation design. Guy Smith, Borough solicitor, observed that—in all his years of serving as a municipal attorney—"this is how the process should work!"

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

services: writing conservation subdivision ordinance, subdivision design services

client: Rose Valley Borough

